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Mahoney Peter F., Ryan James M., Brooks Adam J., and Schwab C. William (eds) Ballistic trauma, a practical guide, second edition (Springer, Heidelberg, 2005; 161 Figures, 67 Tables, 667 pp; ISBN 185233679X)

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This is the second and expanded edition of the book bearing the title *Ballistic trauma: clinical relevance in peace and war*, published by Arnold 1997. There are more than 50 contributors to this softcover book, bringing together the views of UK and US experts from both military and civilian backgrounds. The result is a heterogeneous book on the various aspects of firearm injuries. The book has four sections. The first (Introduction, Background, and Science) considers within a wider scope, the issues surrounding gunshot wounds such as small arms control, international humanitarian law, ballistics of firearms and explosive devices, wound ballistics, ballistic protection, and forensic aspects of ballistic injury. The second section, comprising most of the book, concentrates on clinical care, including resuscitation, anesthesia, and clinical ballistics. It also has chapters addressing more specific issues such as particular regions of the body. The third section deals with the treatment of gunshot wounds in resource-limited situations such as disasters or conflicts. The fourth and final section illustrates problems that occur again and again on the battlefield or on humanitarian deployments.

The book is intended primarily for surgeons, but is certainly interesting for every expert interested in gunshot wounds. The authors do not have a single common denominator, which is surprising when one considers that as many as 50 different experts have made contributions to the book. However, this composite view was deliberate, as it was recognized that these potentially diverse views reflect the complexity of an international problem that increasingly impinges on the practice of surgery in today's world.

All in all, the book can be recommended to every expert dealing with ballistic trauma for use as a source book likely to stimulate new insights and ideas. However, it should not be taken as a textbook summing up today's knowledge in a detailed and systematic fashion. Instead, the reader is invited to browse through an abundance of information and to look for aspects interesting to him. The two chapters on wound ballistics and forensic aspects of ballistic injury are quite brief that there is nothing really new for the forensic medical expert.

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